REMARKS

This Reply is submitted in response to the final Office Action dated March 11, 2008. Claims 1-8, and 10 remain present in this application. Claim 9 has been cancelled. In the present Office Action: claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,341,271 (hereinafter "Salvo") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,204,763 (hereinafter "Sone"). Applicants have amended claim 1 to substantially incorporate the subject matter of cancelled claim 9. Applicants have filed concurrently herewith a request for continued examination (RCE). No new matter has been entered with the amendments to the claims.

As is set forth in Applicants' independent claim 1, as amended, a store inventory management system includes: a computer system, a communication interface between the computer system and a universally accessible database, and an inventory control element executable on the computer system. The computer system is configured to access a database of current food-related inventory for a store and a database of food-related orders for the store. Selections of food-related items that are absent from a plurality of homes are accessible at the computer system via the universally accessible database according to a plurality of universal identifiers each respectively associated with one of the plurality of homes. The inventory control element is configured to adjust future food-related orders for the store according to current food-related inventory, ordered food-related inventory, and the selections of food-related items that are absent from the plurality of homes. The inventory control element is further configured to assign a sale offer for a particular period to a particular food-related item according to the selections of food-related items that are absent from the plurality of homes.

With respect to the rejection of Applicants' independent claim1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), Applicants again agree that Salvo fails to explicitly disclose 'food related inventory'. Moreover, Applicants note that Salvo is merely directed to an inventory management system that is capable of monitoring inventory amounts of a single inventory user (e.g., at a manufacturing site or an inventory vendor site), automatically placing orders for replacement inventory with an inventory supplier (based on predetermined criteria), and tracking delivery progress of the replacement inventory from the inventory supplier to the single inventory user.
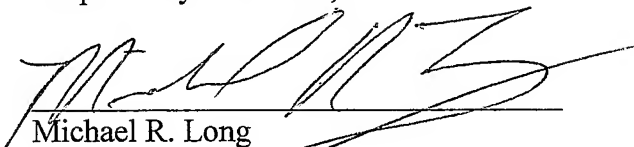
Furthermore, while Sone is directed to a household consumable item automatic replenishment system that seeks to maintain a desired inventory of household consumable items, the Sone system merely monitors household consumable items for a single household and orders

replacement items for given items when the given items fall (or are predicted to fall) below desired levels. Moreover, Salvo (see, for example, column 6, lines 18-22) is not directed to assigning a sale offer for a particular period to a particular food-related item according to selections of food-related items that are absent from a plurality of homes. More specifically, the cited Salvo passage is merely directed to a control unit that stores and analyzes historical trends of inventory prices to determine price trends. Based on the price trends, the Salvo control unit provides information concerning opportune times to purchase inventory based on price. As is disclosed, in this manner, the Salvo system (which includes the control unit) may purchase inventory from a low-priced inventory vendor based on real-time prices. In sum, neither Salvo or Sone, alone or in combination, teach or suggest adjusting future food-related orders for a store according to current food-related inventory, ordered food-related inventory, and selections of food-related items that are absent from a plurality of homes. Nor does Salvo or Sone, alone or in combination, teach or suggest assigning a sale offer for a particular period to a particular food-related item according to selections of food-related items that are absent from a plurality of homes. As noted above, Salvo is directed to a system that purchases inventory (as contrasted with a system that sells inventory).

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' independent claim 1, as amended, is allowable over the applied art of record. Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-8, and 10 are also allowable for at least the reason that the claims depend on allowable claims.

Applicants request a telephone interview prior to action on this reply. Applicants' representative may be reached at (512) 617-5521.

Respectfully submitted,

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